



[Update from U.S. Senator John Cornyn](#)

December 1, 2004

During this holiday season, let's take the time to reach out and support those in need in our community—the widow and the orphan, the hungry or the poor, and those families who simply cannot be whole during the holidays. Men and women from so many families are defending our security and freedoms overseas that I urge all my fellow Texans to show these families particular respect and affection as we gather to celebrate this season.

Combating Human Trafficking and Slavery

I was pleased to join Texas and federal officials in San Antonio and El Paso this week in unveiling new task forces geared toward combating human trafficking and slavery. Under this effort, local, state and federal law enforcement agencies will be working together to identify, apprehend, and prosecute those responsible for human trafficking offenses. Trafficking is carefully hidden and difficult to uncover. Federal officials cannot do it alone. State laws criminalizing trafficking and slavery as well as regional task forces like those unveiled this week will help to coordinate the efforts of every level of government.

It is sometimes hard to imagine that this horrible crime against humanity continues today, but the fact is that at least 15,000 men, women and children are trafficked into lives of slavery in the United States each year. Their stories are tragic, disturbing and heart-rending. When Congress reconvenes next month, I will fight for additional measures that I recently introduced in the Senate to support our law enforcement authorities, increase penalties for trafficking crimes and ensure that the death penalty is available for trafficking offenses. Slavery should not exist anywhere in the world—and certainly not in the United States of America.

Making Prevention a Priority

In November, I had the opportunity to visit the University of North Texas Health Science Center and the DREAMS (Diabetes Research Education and Metabolic Studies) Center in Fort Worth. It was a great opportunity to look at the work they are doing to combat the diabetes and obesity crisis Texas faces.

Today, thousands of Texans and millions of Americans suffer from chronic diseases that are, for the most part, preventable. Our nation spends up to \$1.7 trillion on healthcare—more than any other country in the world. Treatment of chronic diseases accounts for roughly 75 percent of those healthcare costs.

I believe we need to make prevention a priority. Preventing the onset of disease promotes a higher quality of life and costs much less than treating disease after it happens. We need to redirect our healthcare efforts, encouraging prevention and giving people the information and care they need to live healthy lives.

Texans in the Administration

During the past month, the President has nominated several worthy individuals—some well known in Texas—to assume leadership positions in his second-term Cabinet and replace those who stepped down following four years of dutiful and responsible service. Judge [Al Gonzales](#) has been nominated to serve as Attorney General—I believe he will do an excellent job.

I joined my fellow Texans in thanking [Rod Paige](#) for his service at the Department of Education. The President has nominated [Margaret Spellings](#), whom many know from her days in Texas, to take this position. I have enormous respect for Margaret's wise counsel on a wide number of domestic policy issues, and I am confident that she will provide the country with a strong and knowledgeable voice on critical education issues as she furthers the No Child Left Behind policy goals.

As we move into a second term, I look forward to working with all Cabinet members to seek the best possible solutions for the challenges facing Texas and America.

For more information click here:

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=227926>

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=227960>

<http://www.cornyn.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=228024>

Sustained Growth in the Economy

The Bureau of Economic Analysis announced this week that it revised last quarter's growth estimate to reflect higher growth than previously reported. America's gross domestic product grew at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.9 percent during the third

quarter of 2004. The upward revision was driven by growth in consumer spending, up from 4.6 percent to 5.1 percent, and business investment growth, up from 11.7 percent to 12.9 percent.

The average quarterly growth over the last year was nearly 4 percent, and after 12 consecutive quarters of growth, it's clear that the economy is back on the right track. As President Bush begins his second term, I am confident that we will be able to continue our economic growth and ensure our global competitiveness by adopting sound policies that further tax reform and relief, lower health care costs, reduce bureaucratic regulations, and restrain government spending.

Come See Me

If you're traveling to Washington for business or pleasure, I would greatly appreciate the chance to say hello while you're here. I host an open house in my office, Hart Senate Office Building, Room 625, from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. every Tuesday when Congress is in session, so I can greet and talk with Texans. Please call my assistant, Denise Pleasant, at (202) 224-2934 to let me know you'll be coming.

Best regards,

Senator John Cornyn

More information on these issues is available on my Senate web site, www.cornyn.senate.gov. The site also includes press releases and other information that may be of interest to you.